



Weekly Activity Update

May 28 - June 4 • 2005 • Issue 88

Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement

The economic growth of Afghanistan is reliant on the success of the agricultural sector. Recent estimates are that agriculture's contribution to the country's GDP is about 51%, employing 85% of the total labor force. With modern technologies and rehabilitated infrastructure, Afghan farmers can meet food sufficiency requirements as well as increased income and foreign exchange earnings.

USAID is improving Afghanistan's irrigation infrastructure as a means of increasing agricultural productivity. Projects include dams, spillway and diversion channels, intakes, and distribution systems.

The Sar-e Haus Dam is the largest dam in Northwest Afghanistan, providing irrigation for an estimated 600,000 people. USAID is reinforcing the left dam abutment, which supports the weight of the dam. The project is 85% complete, with a target completion date of mid-June. In addition, the old center spillway reinforcement construction is scheduled to begin in August 2005.

Sar-e Haus irrigation infrastructure projects completed to date include the Mohammed Agha and Moghul Khil Intakes, Zana Khan Dam, Sardeh Irrigation System, Shah Rawan Intake Rehabilitation, Sar-e Haus Dam emergency rehabilitation, and the Sar-e Haus Spillway and Diversion Channel.



Sar-e Haus dam: left abutment work in progress (May 2005)



Bagh-e Alam health clinic (May 2005)

School and Clinic Construction

USAID is committed to providing sufficient health care facilities and schools in Afghanistan. In FY2005, USAID will support the construction of 277 health facilities. To date, 32 clinics have been completed and 204 are under construction. As the number of children attending school increases, USAID is responding by building or rehabilitating additional schools. In FY2005, USAID has constructed 136 new schools, with an additional 150 schools under construction.

In addition to facility construction, USAID supports the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and the Academic Council on Education to improve policy formulation, strategic planning and program development, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition, USAID has trained over 7,500 teachers in formal classroom settings, and 65,000 teachers in remote areas through the Radio Teacher Training Program.



Rahman Mena school: brick work in the superstructure of the school (May 2005)

Strengthening the Government

USAID is working with community leaders, political parties and potential independent candidates to ensure high participation in the parliamentary elections in September. Currently, USAID is engaged in an effort to increase the number of candidates running for office.

The Wolesi Jirga (WJ) is the lower house of the bicameral national assembly of Afghanistan, consisting of 249 delegates directly elected through a system of proportional representation. By late May, 2,824 candidates had registered for the Wolesi Jirga, also known as the House of the People. Of those candidates, 338, almost 12%, are women. The gender quota for the Provincial Councils has been set at 25%, or 68 seats of the 420 available. Thus far, of the 3,102

registered candidates for the Provincial Council, 279 or almost 9%, are women candidates. There are 10 seats reserved for Kuchis (nomads) in the WJ. Sixty nine candidates have registered, with almost 9% of them women.

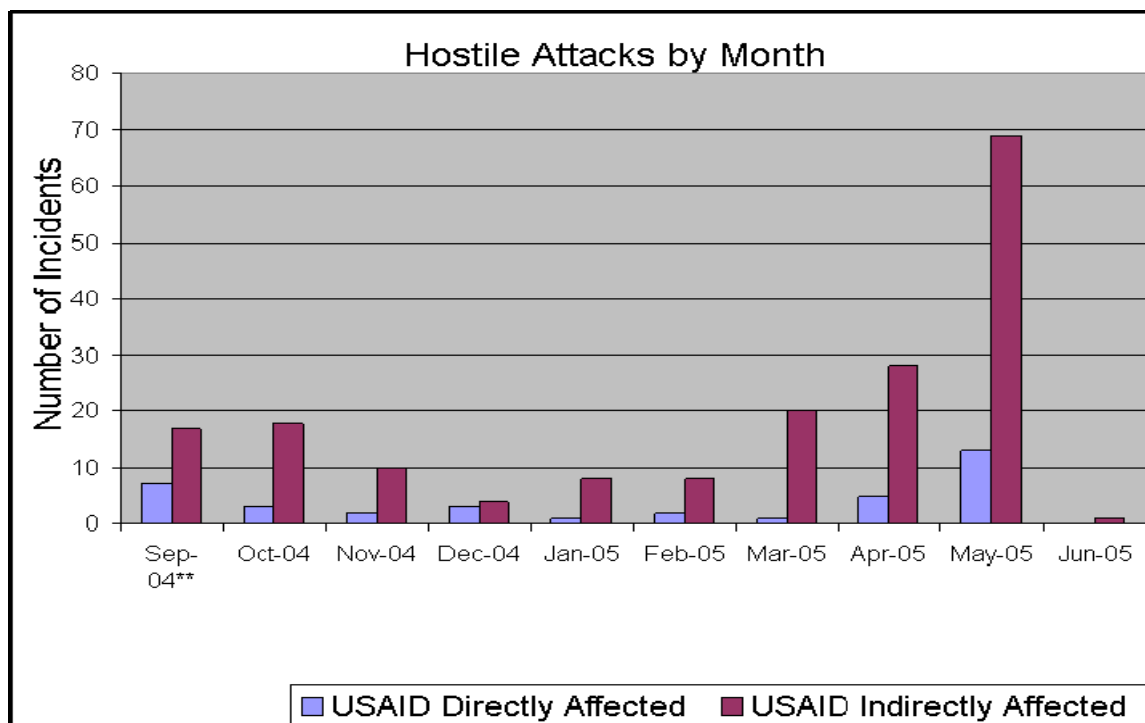
The candidate review and vetting process is underway and a preliminary candidate list will be displayed nationwide on June 4. The final candidate list is expected on July 12. USAID is helping to conduct a pilot test of the ballots. In addition, the Complaint and Media Commissions are operational.

Upcoming key election milestones include voter registration from June 25 – July 21, voter additions and corrections by July 22, final Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) certified candidate list and the final voter list on September 1, 2005. Elections will be held on September 18, 2005.

Security Incidents

Note: Hostile attacks are reported through USAID's security contractors and the Associated Press

- **Number of Hostile Attacks:** During this reporting period, there were nine hostile attacks resulting in 26 deaths and 80 injuries.
- **USAID Related:** During this reporting period, there were three hostile attacks directly affecting USAID related projects and/or staff. There were six other attacks against other aid agencies and NGOs.
- **Last Attacks:** On May 29 in Kandahar, Mullah Mawlawi Abdullah Fayaz, a leading cleric and opponent of the Taliban in southern Afghanistan, was killed. On June 1, a bomb blast resulting from a suicide bomber exploded in the Abdol Rab Akhondzada Mosque where a memorial service was being held for Mullah Fayaz. Twenty were killed, including the Kabul Chief of Police, and forty injured in the blast,. Also on June 1, on Kandahar to Herat highway, an IED planted on a bicycle detonated killing 2 Afghan deminers and injuring 5 others.



**ANSO Security Updates began Sept 2004